

Appendix 7.4

5th December 2022

Sally Riley
Redrow Homes Ltd
Central Payments
Redrow Homes Lancashire
Redrow House
St David's Park
Ewloe
Flintshire
CH5 3RX

Dear Ms Riley,

RE: Water Vole Survey, Land at Stakehill

A water vole survey was undertaken on 14th October 2022 at the ditch (D1) within the site Land at Stakehill (hereafter referred to as the site) by Lizzie Atkinson MSc Qual CIEEM (two years' experience in undertaking water vole surveys) and assisted by Evie Berry BSc. The water vole survey was undertaken during suitable weather conditions (dry, sunny (2/8), calm air (Force 0 on the Beaufort Scale) and 14°C). The survey was carried out in accordance with the Water Vole Conservation Handbook (2nd ed).

The onsite ditch (D1) that will be impacted by the proposals was surveyed by walking within accessible sections of the ditch. Approximately 5m of the central section of the ditch could not be accessed due to dense vegetation. The banks along the remaining sections of the ditch could be easily searched for signs of use by water vole. Limitations with access to the banks in a section of approximately 5m have been taken into account in the conclusions of this report.

Water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) are a Species of Principal Importance and also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose;
- intentionally kill, injure or take water voles;
- possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives;
- sell water voles or offer or expose for sale or transport for sale; and
- publish or cause to be published any advertisement which conveys the buying or selling of water voles.

Water vole footprints were identified at OS grid reference SD 887 091. No other evidence of water vole or burrows was recorded throughout the section of the ditch surveyed. A weasel was identified in the scrub habitat north of the ditch during the survey.

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The onsite ditch (D1) will be impacted due to the addition of a site entrance road within the current indicative masterplan. These works would cause disruption to any water vole that may be using the onsite ditch (D1). Due to evidence of water vole within the ditch, an updated water vole survey prior to the start of works will be required. A toolbox talk is also recommended for all construction workers prior to the start of works for water vole or if in the event the species is found. Ecological supervision will likely be required during works to the ditch (D1) following the outcome of the water vole check prior to the works commencing. If further evidence of water vole are identified, a mitigation strategy should be produced and implemented that identifies appropriate mitigation measures to avoid harm to water vole.

If the ditch (D1) is to be retained at a later stage, all works within 5m of the ditch will require an updated water vole survey. Ecological supervision may also be required for any works adjacent to the ditch (D1).

In the event that water vole are encountered during the proposed works, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Yours sincerely,



Lizzie Atkinson
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